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SUBJECT: YUNNAN: CHINA'S MAIN COUNTERNARCOTICS BATTLEFIELD SEES  
DOMESTIC SUCCESSES, FACES INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES

CHENGDU 00000169 001.2 OF 002

11. (U) This cable contains sensitive but unclassified  
information - not for distribution on the Internet.

12. (SBU) Summary: Narcotics control is making progress in Yunnan Province, the heart of Chinese drug trafficking, a senior provincial official told Consul General, but interdicting imports from the neighboring Golden Triangle remains difficult. The great majority of narcotics in the province are passing through rather than being produced or consumed in the province, and the number of addicts in Yunnan has fallen. In the area of treatment and rehabilitation, the Kunming Treatment Center for Drug Addicts is a national model, the official said. End Summary.

Yunnan: China's Main Battlefield for Narcotics

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13. (SBU) Yunnan Province is the main battlefield for control of narcotics in China, Yunnan Narcotics Control Bureau Deputy Director Xu Yujiang told Consul General August 12 in Kunming. Noting that he had hosted the DEA Assistant Regional Director from Bangkok and Beijing's DEA Attache the previous day on a field visit to the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in southern Yunnan, Xu emphasized the "great harm" drugs do to Yunnan owing to its proximity to the Golden Triangle. Party Committee and Provincial Government officials pay close attention to narcotics control, he said, and all branches of public security are involved in efforts to control narcotics. For 20 years, he said, Yunnan Province has given priority to drug prevention and control, prohibiting cultivation, production, use, and sales of narcotics.

14. (SBU) Xu emphasized that Yunnan serves as a major drug transshipment point and that there is little drug production that takes place in the province. Asked by the CG about drug use in the province, Xu admitted that this does remain an issue owing to Yunnan's longstanding heroin problem, though the number of heroin addicts has decreased recently, he said. Problems with increasing use of "new" drugs like methamphetamines are occurring mainly in China's East, he claimed, but due to

Yunnan's relatively low incomes such drugs have not taken hold here.

#### The People's War on Drugs

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15. (SBU) Briefing CG on measures Yunnan authorities have taken historically to control the flow of drugs into the province, Xu reported that from 1982-2007, Yunnan Province handled 190,000 drug cases, captured 155 tons of drugs, and intercepted thousands of tons of precursor chemicals being smuggled from Yunnan into neighboring countries. More than 50 narcotics control officers lost their lives, he said, with more than another 300 injured. From 2005-2007, Yunnan and other provinces in China carried out a "People's War on Drugs," and in these three years Yunnan Province handled 54,000 drug cases, captured roughly 62,000 drug-related criminals, and confiscated 28.8 tons of drugs, Xu said. (Comment: officials' use here of the Chinese equivalent for "handled" or "dealt with" generally refers to all manner and status of drug cases, including perpetrators being fined, detained, arrested, investigated, prosecuted, sentenced, or sent for treatment. Due to their lack of specificity of meaning these numbers are difficult to reconcile precisely with figures published in other sources, such as Chinese news reports, but they appear reasonably close. End Comment.)

#### Situation Improving, But Still Serious

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16. (SBU) In recent years drugs entering Yunnan from the Golden Triangle have decreased, the number of addicts in Yunnan has decreased sharply, and the consumer market has shrunk greatly, Xu asserted. In 2008, Yunnan handled 13,158 drug cases, carried out 15,018 arrests, and captured heroin, amphetamines, and opium totaling 6,536kg. In that year, Yunnan authorities captured 1,238kg of opium alone, an increase of 15.6 percent over the previous year.

17. (SBU) Despite this progress, Xu continued, drugs entering China from abroad remain a serious problem, with poppy cultivation in the Golden Triangle continuing to increase. "Methods used for penetrating the border are always changing," he lamented. Production of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), including drugs such as ecstasy, are also a serious problem, he added, noting that there were 3,078 ATS cases in 2008, with authorities capturing 2,251kg.

#### Yunnan Taking New Measures to Combat Drugs

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18. (SBU) Noting the PRC's passage of national anti-drug legislation in 2008, Xu told CG that in order to consolidate recent counter-narcotics achievements, the Party and government were conducting a second round of the People's War on Drugs from 2008-2010. In Yunnan, officials are tightening measures to reduce cross-border flows of narcotics, increasing interdictions (including along land, air, and postal routes), and are

"striking hard" at transnational and trans-border drug crimes. At the same time, Yunnan authorities are organizing public education campaigns and increasing international cooperation with border countries, including assisting those countries with crop replacement programs to help combat poppy cultivation. Yunnan Province is also promoting drug treatment and rehabilitation, and working to establish "drug-free" communities and to reduce the number of addicts in society. Yunnan currently has 26 drug-free counties, Xu reported, and 724 drug-free towns.

¶9. (SBU) Asked by the CG about treatment centers, Xu explained that government treatment centers in Yunnan are managed by Public Security. These "open centers" (meaning those seeking treatment are not sequestered from their families) primarily conduct education and training. The Kunming Treatment Center for Drug Addicts is a model center for China, he said.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: The overall picture Yunnan Narcotics Control Bureau officials presented to us tracks with Chinese news reports on counter-narcotics efforts in China, and with information presented in the Department's annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Report. This suggests moderate success by the PRC in improving domestic aspects of China's narcotics problem, while highlighting the continued international challenge the country's neighbors pose for counter-narcotics efforts. End Comment.

¶11. (U) This cable has been coordinated with Embassy Beijing.  
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